

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

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Report of the Second Meeting of the CGIAR Oversight Committee

The CGIAR Oversight Committee held its second meeting in Washington, D.C. on October 21, 22 and 25, 1993. Please find attached the report prepared by the Committee which summarizes its deliberations. The Oversight Committee plans to hold its third meeting at FAO in Rome, January 26-28, 1993.

Distribution:

CGIAR Members

Center Board Chairs

Center Directors

TAC Chair, TAC Members, and TAC Secretariat

DECEMBER 7, 1993

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE CGIAR OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Introduction

Participating in the meetings held in Washington, D.C. on October 21-22 and 25, 1993 were Henri Carsalade, Vir Chopra, Ralph Cummings, Jr. (Secretary), Paul Egger (Chairman), Robert Herdt, Johan Holmberg, and Selçuk Özgediz (Resource Person). The Committee also met with Alexander von der Osten (Executive Secretary of the CGIAR), Alex McCalla (Chairman of TAC), and V. Rajagopalan (Chairman of the CGIAR).

The objective of the meeting was to continue to deal with priority governance and leadership issues. The major topics were:

1. Vision and Strategy for the CGIAR
2. CGIAR's Central Structure
3. Developing Country Needs and Representation of NARSs
4. Follow-up on Governance/Watching Brief
5. Consultation Principles
6. Reporting
7. Update on List of Issues
8. Work Program for 1994
9. ICW Agenda
10. Consideration of the "Summary of Conclusions Reached at the Second Meeting of the Oversight Committee"
11. Rotation
12. Other Business
13. Future Meetings

Vision and Strategy for the CGIAR

The Committee reviewed options for revitalizing the CGIAR system. At its beginning, the rationale for the CGIAR was clear. However, the world around it has changed markedly since the CGIAR last looked at questions concerning the long-term vision of its future at the time of the expansion of the system. Its supporters expect from the CGIAR frequent assessment of the continuing viability of its long-term vision and exploration of alternatives at times of major change. Its supporters also expect from the CGIAR a clearly understandable strategy that highlights the core components of a CGIAR research program directed towards the new vision, one that can be implemented with resources expected to be available to the system in the future.

Therefore, the Committee proposes that a new vision for the CGIAR's future be formulated by a) inviting a small external panel of experts to provide a succinct statement of the future of global food, agriculture, and environment with and without effective research and the role that could be played by the CGIAR, and, b) inviting a panel of internal experts to develop a succinct statement of the CGIAR's strategy for operationalizing the new vision. To launch the new vision and strategy and to mobilize additional support for the system, the Committee proposes that a ministerial level donor conference, similar to Bellagio I, be organized in early 1995 under the leadership of the heads of the World Bank, FAO, and the UNDP. These initial considerations were summarized in a draft paper, "A Proposal for Revitalizing the CGIAR System," prepared by the Committee which was circulated at ICW 93.

1. Purpose is to convince internal and external stakeholders of the relevance and responsiveness of the global agricultural research scene in the long-run by undertaking a probing examination of the rationale for agricultural research and identifying areas where changes are needed. The effort should:
 - a. Raise awareness of the issue.
 - b. Identify future challenges and research needs.
 - c. Stimulate resources.
2. The vision should embody the following principles:
 - a. Audience should be decision makers/aid and finance ministers.
 - b. Global vision on food, agriculture, and the environment; the role of research; and the contribution of the CGIAR. The vision should focus on the developing world. It should highlight research but go beyond the CGIAR.
 - c. An outside view is needed to freshen and provide context for inside planning of system response.
3. The CGIAR strategy, prepared by insiders, should be in form and language understandable by outsiders.

4. A high level meeting of aid/finance ministers could work if:
 - a. The three co-sponsors endorse, with the lead by Mr. Preston.
 - b. There is careful preparation.
 - c. Products and results are clear and compelling.

While the Committee understands that the chances of success are far from being fully assured, they are convinced that the consequences of not acting are ominous! What will be the consequences of continuing erosion of support on food, food prices, economic growth, health, population, and the environment?

The Oversight Committee is prepared to oversee the process on behalf of the CGIAR. Henri Carsalade (with lead role), Johan Holmberg, and Selçuk Özgediz (as Secretary) will take the following next steps:

1. Identify external persons to prepare a draft vision paper.
2. Work through the CGIAR Chairman to request the co-sponsors, with Mr. Preston taking the lead, to organize a high-level meeting in January 1995.
3. Interface closely with TAC, the Center Directors (especially IFPRI which is preparing 2020 Vision), PAA/PARC, and the Finance Committee throughout the process.

This topic will be discussed at the next meeting of the Oversight Committee and a report presented at MTM 94.

CGIAR's Central Structure

The Committee agreed that the reason for addressing this issue is because of questions raised about the following:

1. Does the CGIAR have adequate instruments at the system level to manage change?
2. Does the CGIAR have adequate instruments at the system level to manage its ongoing business?
3. Are these instruments cost effective and efficient?

As an initial analysis, the Committee looked at the functions that need to be performed at the system level and identified optional ways these could be performed. It analyzed options for a future TAC. It also examined, in preliminary fashion, the question of whether the CGIAR now needs one or two secretariats. These initial considerations were summarized in a draft paper, "CGIAR's Central Structure: Is There Need for Change?," prepared by the Committee which was circulated at ICW 93.

In order to do an adequate job, the Committee agrees that it should address the respective governance roles of all components of the system including:

- o The co-sponsors
- o TAC/TAC Secretariat
- o CGIAR Secretariat
- o Oversight Committee/Finance Committee
- o Public Awareness Association (PAA)/Public Awareness Mobilization Committee (PARC)
- o Boards of the independent centers

The Committee was convinced by the complexity of the issue and the advisability to proceed with full consultation of all concerned parties. Therefore it decided to take the following steps:

1. Recommend that the CGIAR and the Co-sponsors exercise caution in making new appointments to TAC and the secretariats in order not to limit future staffing options.
2. Distribute a questionnaire to members and centers asking that individuals within the system who wish to share their views on this subject with the Committee should send their comments to Bob Herdt by December 31, 1993.
3. Compile the terms of reference of the respective components of the system and verify their accuracy.
4. Discuss the matter during its next meeting.
5. Report back to the Group at MTM 94.

Ralph Cummings, Jr. and Bob Herdt will take the lead in collating comments from interested persons and preparing a draft paper to be discussed at the next Oversight Committee meeting.

Developing Country Needs and Representation of NARSs

The Committee drew a distinction between two aspects of this issue: (1) representation of developing country views at the system-level in the CGIAR and (2) the centers' relationships with NARSs. The Committee focused primarily on the first of these concerns.

Regarding representation of developing country views in the CGIAR, the experience has been very mixed. The Committee concluded that the current process of selecting Fixed Term Representatives is in contrast with CGIAR principles. The selection of countries rather than individuals leads to appointment of persons who do not necessarily have the requisite breadth of experience and regional mandate for addressing the agriculture and agricultural research issues of the regions they represent. The Committee:

1. Recommended that FAO be invited to review and adjust the current selection process in such a way as to facilitate the selection of those individuals who, by their experience and personal qualifications, can best represent the views of the region.
2. Urged that FAO be invited to facilitate the Fixed-Term Representatives' preparation for and effective participation in CGIAR meetings until a more suitable appointment mechanism is identified.

However, the Committee concluded that the problem is more basic than Fixed-Term Representation. The basic problem is clarification of the role of developing countries within the CGIAR. In order to explore this topic at more depth, the Committee recommended that, as an experiment, the 1994 MTM in New Delhi be preceded by a one or two day workshop/seminar on a substantive research concern of significant importance to the region which also provides a forum for interaction between developing country and center scientists and donors. The first choice of topics would be rainfed agriculture, the second choice would be sustainability issues in wheat/rice cropping systems. The basic orientation would be to identify the nature of the research problems from a local (e.g. NGO) perspective, what NARSs (including universities and private sector) can contribute, and finally what IARCs can contribute to supplement and reinforce the work of the NARSs and how to best provide this supplementing and reinforcing role.

Vir Chopra (with lead role), Henri Carsalade, and Paul Egger will take the lead in preparing a proposal to be discussed at the next Oversight Committee meeting.

Follow-up on Governance/Watching Brief

The Committee reviewed the process of selection of the new Chairman of the CGIAR to succeed Mr. Rajagopalan on January 1, 1994. The World Bank President had taken into consideration the principles agreed on by and had consulted with the Group in considering its nomination. The Committee recommends that the Group should express satisfaction and appreciation with the process.

The Committee reviewed the timing and process of selection of the new Chairman of TAC to succeed Mr. McCalla on January 1, 1995. The Committee recommended initiating the search process shortly after ICW 93 and modifying the process as necessary after recommendations for central structure are better known and the terms of reference can be appropriately stated. The Committee endorsed the main elements of the process outlined by the CGIAR Secretariat. Broad consultation will be expected to take place within the CGIAR during the search.

The Committee also recommended that a transparent process with broad consultation be followed in selection of the next CGIAR and TAC Executive Secretaries.

The Committee reviewed the development of center governance in three areas: ICLARM, INIBAP/IBPGR, and the new livestock center.

Regarding ICLARM, the Committee welcomed the actions taken by the Board. It is pleased that the Director General selection process is moving rapidly. It also commends the CGIAR Secretariat and the Board Chair for their active role in helping normalize the situation. The Committee urges the CGIAR

Secretariat and the Board to move rapidly in the appointments of CGIAR nominees to the ICLARM board.

On the integration of INIBAP into IBPGR, the Committee:

1. Welcomes the broad acceptance of the option to transfer authority to IBPGR's board and Director-General as a way of implementing the CGIAR's San Juan decision.
2. Finds the steps identified at the October 6, 1993 meeting at Mme. Chedeville-Murray's office in Paris among concerned parties to be a reasonable course to follow.
3. Urges the INIBAP Donor Support Group to establish a timetable and facilitate the process of integration with deliberate speed.
4. Expects the integration/transfer to be completed by MTM 94.

On the establishment of the new livestock center, the Committee commends the Steering Committee and ILCA and ILRAD for the progress they have made so far.

The Committee is considering guidelines for possible action by the Oversight Committee in response to signals from Centers and related to reviews.

Consultation Principles

The Committee recognizes both the importance of consultation for carrying out its mandate effectively and its own limited capacity to consult with all parties. It regards the CGIAR meetings as the main forum for consultation with key actors. Outside of the CGIAR meetings, the Committee feels that consultation with a wide range of actors is essential and that a balance between the desirable and the possible direct interaction has to evolve. The Committee invites any individual or group to consult with it and particularly to feel free to suggest new agenda items of urgency or importance or to comment on agenda items already identified. The Committee does not propose to respond directly to individuals or groups, but proposes to communicate through written and oral reports to the CGIAR as a whole.

Update on List of Issues and Work Program for 1994

The Committee's work program for 1994 includes the items reported on above and additional subjects such as:

1. Structural adjustment of the CGIAR. Representatives of the Oversight Committee and the Finance Committee will meet in Rome in March 1993 to review TAC recommendations after TAC 63.
2. Monitoring the impact of structural adjustment on the present and future capacity of the centers to implement effective programs.

3. Assessment of the system's review policies and processes, including reviewing the ways that External Program and Management Reviews are addressed at ICWs and MTMs. Bob Herdt will take the lead in preparing a proposal to improve Group consideration of the EPMRs to be discussed at the next Oversight Committee meeting.
4. CGIAR policy toward Eastern Europe and New Independent States of the former USSR. Johan Holmberg will take the lead in preparing a statement to be discussed at the next Oversight Committee meeting.

The CGIAR Chairman suggested that the Committee consider organizing a codification of CGIAR policies to ensure that operating principles are clearly understood by all parties in the system. For example, there is no clear statement on qualifications for membership in the system. What does joining the CGIAR involve? What is the price of becoming involved in decision-making? Who should attend the closed sessions of the CGIAR and what types of business should be discussed in these sessions? The Committee agreed to consider this matter at an early date.

ICW (and MTM) Agenda

The MTM 94 agenda will include the following items:

- o Recommendations on restructuring the system of centers
- o Recommendations on the system's central structure
- o The IIMI EPMR
- o Progress report on vision and strategy for the system
- o Follow-up to Agenda 21
- o Progress report on livestock research and IBPGR/INIBAP integration
- o Recommendations on more effective participation by NARs
- o Policy toward Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States

The Committee will review the MTM 94 agenda in January.

Rotation

Following on the suggestion of the CGIAR Chairman, the Committee decided that rotation of membership on the Oversight Committee would begin after an initial two year period in order to get the business of the Committee established with some continuity of membership.

Future Meetings

The Oversight Committee's third meeting is scheduled to be held in Rome on January 26-28, 1994 at FAO. The Committee plans to interact with the TAC Secretariat and with FAO and hopes to meet with the new Director General of FAO during the meeting.

Members of the Oversight Committee will join with the Finance Committee to review the TAC restructuring proposals in a special meeting on March 28-29 in Rome following TAC 63.

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